

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended so as to take care of the formal matter kindly pointed out by the Examiner.

Claim 1 has also been amended so as to sharpen its definition of the invention relative to the prior art.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as unpatentable over GB 2,343,842 in view of McKAY 6,458,442, or further in view of GUZMAN or NAPPI.

In the present invention, the glue layer 5 extends about all sides of the stack. This excludes dirt and moisture from between the individual layers, as we point out on page 3, lines 9-11 of our specification.

The only other edge glueing that we see, takes place in GB 2 343 842, in which only one edge is glued. This is similar to the glueing that takes place along one edge of a notepad, and for the same reason: It simply holds them together. The alternative in GB 2 343 842 is to put the loose pads in a recess or box which holds them together.

Of course, the glueing in GB 2 343 842 would not prevent dirt and moisture from entering between the pads, because the pads are open on three sides.

It would not be obvious to provide GB 2 343 842 with edge glueing all around, because that would fundamentally change the nature and function of the device.

Another example of a means for keeping dirt and moisture from between the pads, is given in McKay U.S. Patent 6,458,442, wherein the individual pads are glued together. But imagine the expense and complexity of applying a separate adhesive layer over all the area of each pad, to say nothing of the increased weight of the stack and the difficulty of pulling one pad from another! Moreover, there would be no way to proceed from McKay to the present invention, because the barrier layers protrude at their edges from the rest of the stack and so edge glueing could not as a practical matter be performed in McKay.

Notice that we do not recite that edge glueing takes place about all the edges of the mat, because it does not: The tabs 7 are necessarily free from glue. Therefore, we say, in our claims, that the glue barrier is applied "on all sides" of the mat, which language is broader than saying that the glueing is provided "on all edges" of the mat.

GUZMAN and NAPPI teach the features for which they were applied; but these features do nothing to improve the rejection on the British document and McKAY.

As claim 1 now brings out the above-identified unobvious subject matter with ample particularity and distinctness, it is

believed that it is patentable, and with it the claims that depend therefrom.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert J. Patch', with a stylized, wavy line extending from the end of the name.

Robert J. Patch, Reg. No. 17,355
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

RJP/mjr